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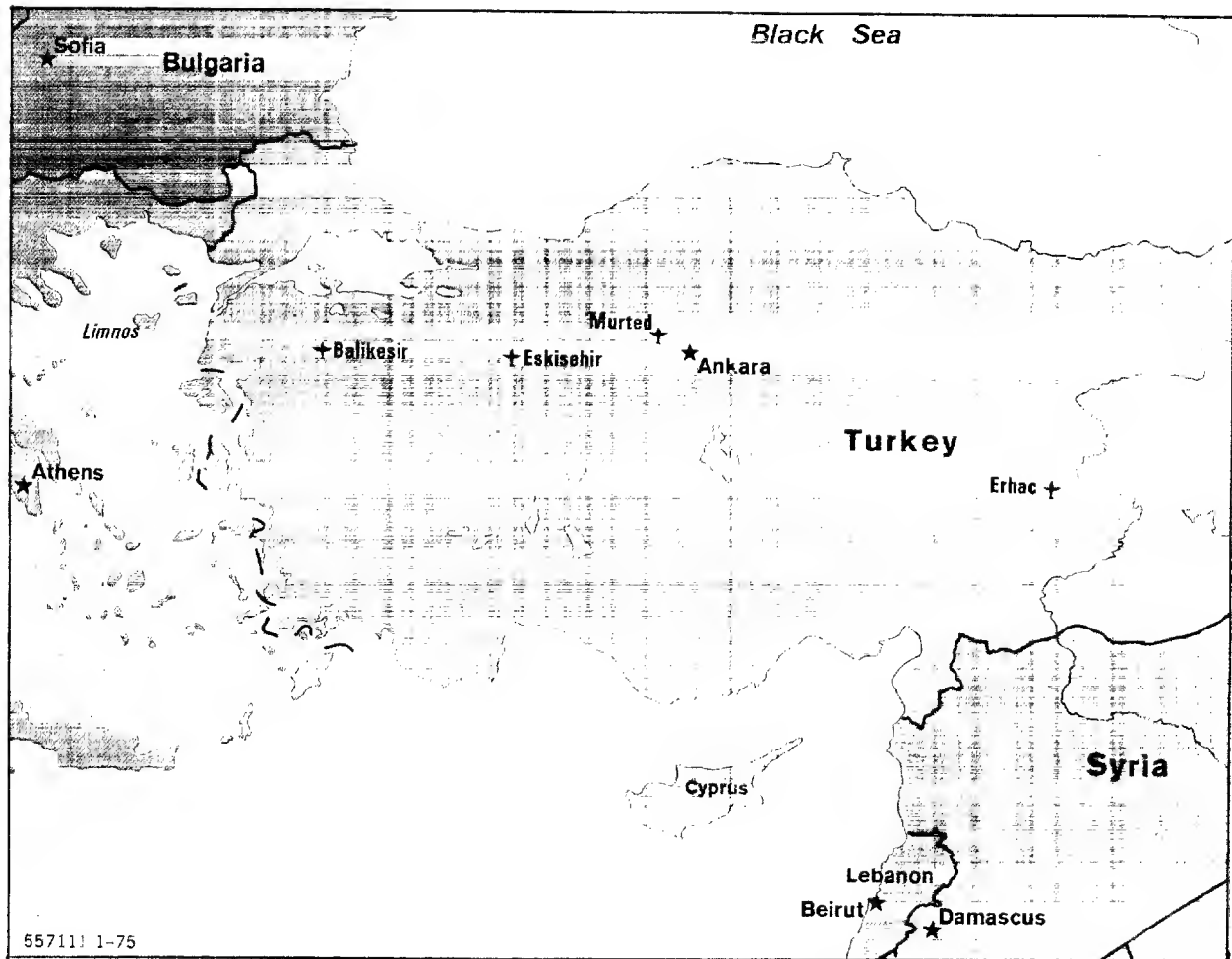
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TURKEY-GREECE

Ankara and Athens have again exchanged tough statements over their rights in the Aegean.

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These moves followed a statement last week by Greek Defense Minister Averoff that Greece would aggressively defend its rights in the Aegean, which he referred to as a Greek sea. Athens also announced last week that it had authorized a foreign contractor to conduct oil exploration in the Aegean. Areas to be explored have not been identified, but seismic exploration ships belonging to other countries have until now refused to enter the disputed area.

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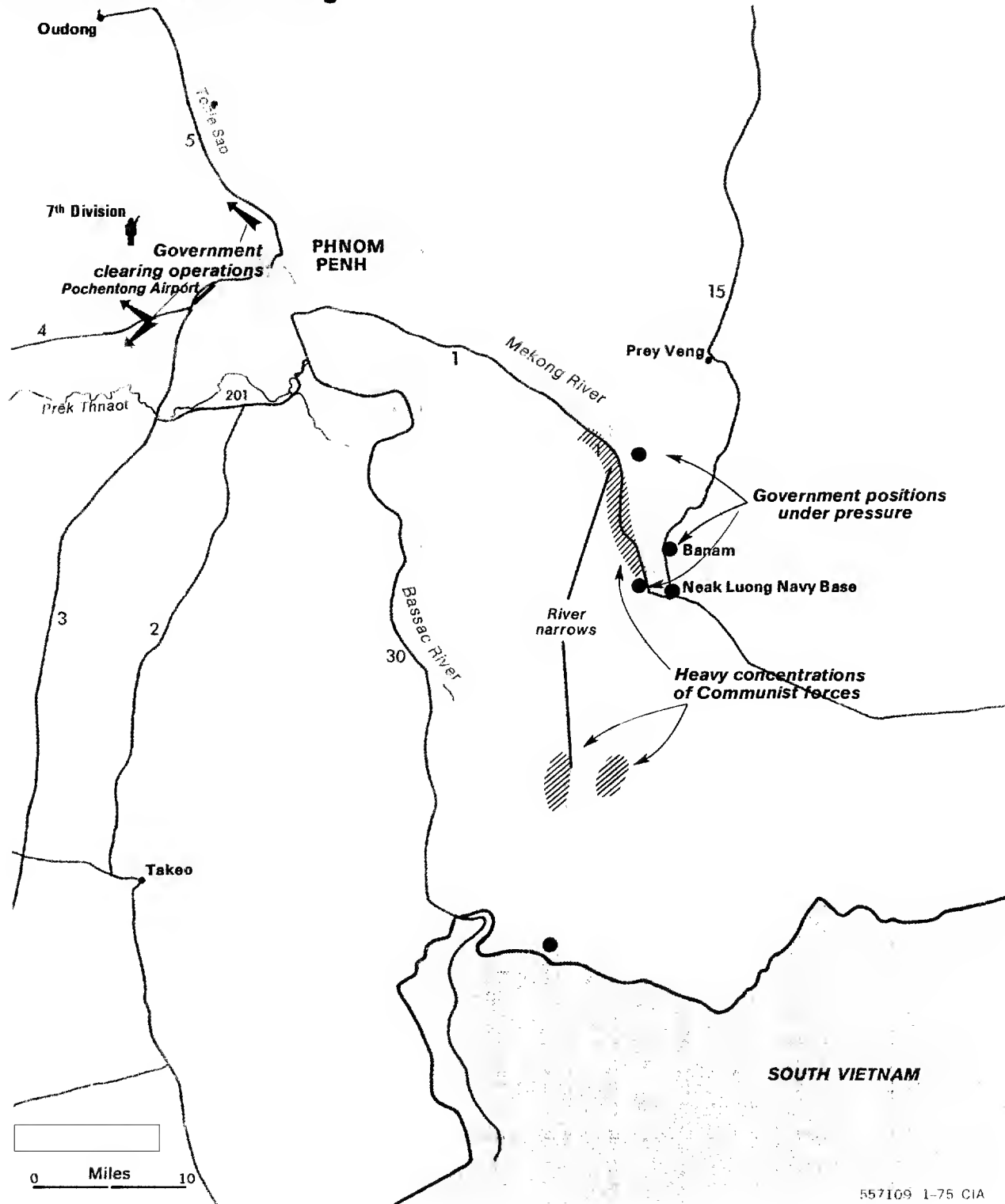
The Turkish defense minister's warning that Turkey would retaliate if pressed was seen by former prime minister Ecevit as insufficient reaction to the Greek moves. Ecevit charged that the Irmak government was negligent in pressing Turkish claims in the disputed area and that the Greeks were taking advantage of this apparent timidity. Seeking to make political capital on another nationalistic issue, Ecevit called on the Irmak government to begin oil explorations of its own in the Aegean as soon as possible. Irmak responded that his government would take all necessary measures to protect Turkish interests in the Aegean.

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Cambodia: Lower Mekong



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CAMBODIA

The Khmer Communists are keeping the pressure on government positions along the Mekong River some 30 miles southeast of Phnom Penh.

Insurgent forces have launched heavy attacks against the riverside town of Banam and are also pressing government defenses on the west bank opposite the Neak Luong navy base. So far government units have held their ground in these areas and are being reinforced. Neak Luong has been hit by sporadic shellings but has not yet been the target of ground attacks.

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Despite heavy insurgent shore fire, three navy convoys have shuttled supplies and reinforcements to Neak Luong since January 10. The easing of the situation around Phnom Penh has also enabled the air force to increase its support of ground units in the Neak Luong area, although a government counterattack on Route 1 has bogged down some 15 miles southeast of the capital. Military leaders are planning to bring a resupply convoy upriver to Phnom Penh from the South Vietnamese border sometime this week, but are keeping the exact sailing date under close wraps in hopes of catching the Communists off guard. The last river convoy arrived in the capital on December 29.

On the Route 5 front, north of Phnom Penh, Communist attacks have forced government troops to abandon several outposts near Oudong. Elsewhere, government clearing operations are continuing on the major battlefronts northwest and southwest of Phnom Penh. Communist rocket attacks against downtown Phnom Penh and against Pochentong airport have caused little damage and few casualties.

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RHODESIA

Moderate nationalist leaders, who dominate the umbrella African National Council, still appear inclined to maintain the truce with Prime Minister Smith, despite his announced intention to stop releasing black political prisoners. The nationalist leaders say that Smith's move is a violation of the truce, but their manifesto last Sunday avoided any threat to resume guerrilla operations. Instead, the nationalists emphasized Smith's earlier agreement to conditions for a cease-fire.

Last Sunday, the Central Committee of the African National Council announced that the council will not participate in any conference with Smith unless he fulfills eight promises the committee claims he made last month in return for a promise by the insurgent leaders to halt guerrilla operations. Smith's eight concessions allegedly included release of some 400 black political prisoners, a general amnesty for insurgents, and an end to emergency legislation that prohibits black political activity. Although Smith has publicly acknowledged only a few of these concessions, his announcement of the truce agreement on December 11 specified that he would release all political detainees and allow them to engage in normal activities in return for a cessation of terrorist activities.

Last week, however, Smith announced that the phased release of the prisoners had been suspended because guerrilla activities had increased in some parts of Rhodesia. Before this announcement, the African National Council had already disclaimed responsibility for the deaths of several white security personnel by isolated guerrilla units. The council's leaders now say that Smith's refusal to release the remaining prisoners is a violation of the truce agreement.

Smith's refusal will make it more difficult for the moderates in the council to restrain the hard-line insurgents who last month argued against a cease-fire unless Smith met their demand for rapid transition to

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majority rule. The hard-liners will be further provoked by a Rhodesian cabinet minister's statement last Sunday that the Smith government still opposes majority rule, even though it is prepared to share power with the black nationalists.

The committee's statement on Sunday made no reference to its objective of early majority rule, but it stated that a constitutional conference should be convened by the British government and chaired by British Foreign Secretary Callaghan. Smith is clearly opposed to British involvement in a constitutional conference, and Callaghan does not appear ready to call one. In calling for British involvement, the council may have intended to force Callaghan's hand.

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